

SENATE BILL 1595

By Marrero

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to parental involvement in public schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 9, is amended by adding the following as a new section to be appropriately designated:

49-6-903.

(a) Although the school environment has a great impact on a child's well-being and academic success, parents and the home environment form the foundation of a child's present and future life. Without proper parental involvement in all aspects of a child's life, the child's prospects to be a well-equipped and useful member of society are greatly diminished. The purpose of this section is to provide information and tools to parents of prekindergarten and through grade twelve (Pre-K-12) students to enable them to have a positive impact on their child's educational success and to set standards for parental accountability.

(b) The following behaviors with respect to the relationship between a child's home and school are identified as possible causes for a student's underachievement:

(1) A child is not physically prepared for the school day due to inadequate rest or improper clothing, lack of necessary school supplies, or frequent tardiness or absence;

(2) A child is not mentally prepared for the school day due to uncompleted homework or inadequate preparation for tests; and

(3) Communication between parents and the teacher is often written rather than through personal contact and often occurs only when a problem has arisen rather than on a consistent basis throughout the school year.

(c) Principles that are the foundation of the approach of this section to parental involvement include:

(1) Parental involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, well planned, and continues throughout the school year;

(2) Parental involvement should be developmental with a preventive rather than remedial approach and an integral part of a strategy to improve student achievement;

(3) Parents do not need to be formally educated to provide support and assistance to improve the academic performance of their child; and

(4) At-risk children have the most to gain from parental involvement.

(d) Strategies that parents may employ to support the learning of their children and improve student achievement include, but are not limited to:

(1) Attend parent-teacher conferences during which the student's strengths and weaknesses are discussed and goals for the student are collaboratively set;

(2) Maintain correspondence with the child's teachers through submission of signed forms and signed homework assignment sheets and respond to formal requests for conference;

(3) Establish a home environment that supports the child as a student;

(4) Contact the teacher if a problem or issue arises with homework, a situation in the home that may disturb the student's performance, or absences and makeup assignments;

(5) Facilitate the student's performance in school by monitoring homework completion and test preparation and helping with curriculum-related activities; and

(6) Provide for the student's on-time attendance, prevent frequent absences, and provide needed school supplies.

(e) Teachers and schools shall develop or utilize current information packets, forms, or videos for sharing information with each parent with written acknowledgement of receipt. The shared information that may be presented in the parent guide to successful student achievement or in the checklist of parental actions that can strengthen parental involvement in a child's educational progress includes:

(1) Expectations of parents with respect to school attendance requirements;

(2) Expectations of parents with respect to a child's physical readiness for school, including provision for adequate night-time sleep; necessary school supplies, which may be obtained through various organizations if needed; meals, which may be obtained through a school's free or reduced-priced meal program if qualified; and immunizations and medical care; and

(3) Expectations of parents with respect to a child's academic work, including time set aside for daily homework and reading, nightly check of homework completion and preparation for tests, early preparation of assigned school projects, signature on required forms, and check of contents of school backpack.

(f) To help parents establish a home environment that supports the child as a student, each teacher shall monitor and assess the quality of the involvement of the parents of each student in the teacher's class. Each prekindergarten through grade three

(Pre-K-3) student report card shall include a section in which the teacher grades the parental involvement as satisfactory, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory on each of the following criteria:

- (1) Parental response to requests for conferences or communication;
- (2) The student's completion of homework and preparation for tests;
- (3) The student's physical preparation for school that has an effect on mental preparation; and
- (4) The frequency of the student's absence and tardiness.

(g) A parent may appeal the report card parental involvement grade assigned by the teacher under subsection (f) through a process adopted by the state board of education by rules promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5, in which the principal, the teacher, and the parent meet to discuss how the report card grade was determined. The meeting shall also provide information and feedback on the steps needed to improve the parental involvement grade, thereby improving the environment and elements that affect student learning.

(h) This section shall be implemented in each local education agency for all applicable schools beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.

SECTION 2 . This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.